

A
JOURNAL

OF THE

Rev. Dr. COKE'S

THIRD TOUR

THROUGH THE

WEST-INDIES:

IN TWO

LETTERS,

TO THE

Rev. J. WESLEY.



L O N D O N:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR M, DCC, XCI.

A L E T T E R, &c.

L E T T E R I.

Grenada, Nov. 28, 1790.

Hon. and most dear Sir,

ON the 16th of October we sailed from *Falmouth*. Sir *John Orde*, Governor of *Dominica*, the Captain, master, surgeon, Mr. *Lyons*, Mr. *Werrill* and myself, were the company in the Cabin. The Captain was very kind and attentive to us, and we had an abundance of every thing we could desire to make the voyage comfortable. Every Friday we observed as a real Fast: and every evening we had family-prayer with the sailors, but could not prevail to have prayer in the morning. The sailors excused themselves by saying they had not time. On each Lord's day I read prayers on deck, and one of us preached. The Boatswain, we have no doubt, was under genuine conviction long before we arrived at *Barbadoes*; and on a mature and minute examination before we landed, we have great reason to hope that two more were awakened. On the 22d inst. we landed on the Island of *Barbadoes*, having been five weeks and two days on our voyage. The pleasing prospect of *Bridgtown* and the plantations around it, with the ships and harbour, which forms one of the most beautiful prospects of the kind in the *West-Indies*, had a very pleasing effect on the minds of the two missionaries, Messrs. *Lyons* and *Werrill*.

I preached three times in *Bridgtown*, and was favoured, particularly the last evening, with large congregations. The Preaching-house will hold about seven hundred people, is very airy, and is in every respect commodious. Mr. *Pearce*, our Missionary in this Island for the two last years, has

has undergone very great persecutions; but the Lord at last inclined the heart of one of the Magistrates towards him, who defended him with spirit, and reduced all to peace. A very extraordinary name has been fixed on the Methodists in this Island—"Hallelujah." Even the little negroes in the streets call them by the name of *Hallelujah* as they pass along. On the morning after I landed, I paid a visit to Governor *Parry*, who received me with much courtesy. A foundation for a great work, I am persuaded, has been laid here, though the society at present is very small.

Having left Mr. *Lyons* behind me with directions to meet me at *St. Christopher's*, I sailed on the 23d after preaching in the evening with Mr. *Werrill* for *Kingston, St. Vincent's*, where I arrived on the day following, time enough to preach in the evening to a full house. Our chapel in *Kingston* formerly belonged to the Roman Catholics, but has been lately purchased by us. It will hold about two hundred and twenty. The next day I set off with Mr. *Baxter* and Mr. *Werrill* to visit the Societies on the windward side of the Island. The country is very hilly, and singularly full of picturesque scenes. The steep mountains with their sharp peaks, the cocoa-trees and plantains, the Grew-grew whose trunk is smaller at the bottom than the top, and which is frequently quite covered (branches, leaves and all) by a plant like the ivy, the sugar-canes planted on the gentle declivities of the mountains, (vales there are none in this Island, except in the Caribb-country) the coffee and cotton plantations, the *Atlantic Ocean* constantly in view, the milk-white foam of the sea between the rocks and promontories sometimes covering a great expanse of water, and the burning sun exulting in his strength and gilding the strong perpetual verdure of the whole vegetable creation—form such scenes as persons unacquainted with the torrid zone have hardly any conception of. Mr. *Werrill* was so charmed with the

prospects, that he confessed he felt himself perfectly reconciled to the *West-Indies*.

We rode to the borders of the *Caribb-land*. Poor people! When Mrs. *Baxter* took her leave of some of them, she wept bitterly, and prayed they might have another call, and might accept and not reject it as they did the late. As we returned, a negro-woman ran up to us out of a field to shake us by the hand. "Do you love God," said Mr. *Werrill* to her. "Yes," said she, "I do, otherwise I would not have come to you. I have felt the Redeemer's Life and Death in my soul." The answer of an old negro to his leader in *Kingston* a short time past, contained in it all the religion of the celebrated conversation between Dr. *Tautler* and the beggar. "If your driver should lay you down and flog you, what would you do," said the leader: "me should love him still," said he. "But if you should get no meat, what would you do then," added the Leader: "me eat," replied he, "Me tank me fader; me no eat, me tank me fader: me live, me tank me fader; me die, me tank me fader." I find the converted negroes in these Islands generally speak of God under the denomination of father. There is certainly a prospect of a great flame throughout the Island. Even many of the Roman Catholics themselves, of whom there are several families here, prefer our Missionaries to their own Priests, and have sent for Mr. *Baxter* to baptize their children. Mr. *Lumb* has also laboured very faithfully and successfully in this Circuit.

I am,

My dear Sir, with very great respect,

Your most dutiful, obliged, and

affectionate Son,

THOMAS COKE.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

St. Vincent's, Dec. 27, 1790.

Hon. and most dear Sir,

ON the 27th of last month I sailed with Mr. *Baxter* for the Island of *Grenada*, where we arrived on the next day about eleven o'clock. We first called on Mr. *Lynch* of the town of St. *George*, who formerly lived in *Antigua*, and was then an acquaintance of Mr. *Baxter*. At his house we found a very comfortable lodging. Being the Lord's-day, we went to church as soon as we had dressed ourselves. The Minister, Mr. *Dent*, was in the midst of his sermon. After the sermon was over, we waited on him in the Vestry-room, where he received us with true christian kindness, and introduced us to several serious coloured people who were then with him in the Vestry-room.

Mr. *Dent* was Curate of *Bridgtown* in *Barbadoes*, when I visited that Island two years ago. He is the only Clergyman in these Islands that has shewn any regard for the Methodists. He defended us in every company, till he himself began to fall into reproach; when that amiable, that admirable man, General *Matthews* the Governor of *Grenada* and Commander in Chief of the Forces in the Caribbee-Islands, singled him out, and gave him the living of St. *George's*, *Grenada*.

Soon after we left Mr. *Dent*, we waited on the General. He honoured us with about an hour's conversation concerning the design of our visit, and begged we would send Missionaries to the Island, "for," said he, "I wish that the Negroes may be fully instructed, and there will be work enough for you and the Clergy of the Island." I thought I could not but promise him a Missionary, which I accordingly did. We dined with him. Among the company at

dinner, were the President of the Council, the Speaker of the Assembly, &c. The Speaker during the conversation expressed a strong desire that I would visit him at his seat in the country, offered to supply me and my friend with horses, to ride with us through the Island, and to introduce me to most of the gentlemen in it: but my plan would not admit of it. In the evening I preached in a large room to a numerous and deeply attentive congregation. About the middle of the discourse two or three young men at the door were very noisy for a minute or two; but on my observing to them that there were Magistrates in that Island who would do us justice, they thought proper to withdraw. After preaching I found that a Society of about twenty seeking souls had been formed by one *Painter*, a free *Mulatto*, and some time a member of our Society in *Antigua*. The following morning at six o'clock Mr. *Baxter* preached, and the room was nearly filled. In preaching he found his soul so moved towards the people, that he promised them he would himself return as their Pastor, if no one else could be nominated at the Conference.

A Negro called on me to inform me that Mr. *Baxter* had nearly finished his discourse (as I staid at home to write, but was desirous of taking my leave of the people) and the poor man observed to me, that a little time ago he dreamed that two Ministers came to the Island for the benefit of the Blacks; he added, that as soon as he saw Mr. *Baxter* and me enter the Church, he knew us immediately to be the very same persons who had been represented to him in his dream. I went and gave the people a short exhortation, after which a very genteel Black woman, who was free and of some property, came up, and taking brother *Painter* by the hand said, "Sir, this good man has kindled a spark among us, and I hope you will send us assistance that it may be preserved and increased." We breakfasted with Mr.

Dent;

Dent; and afterwards made a visit to Mr. *Williams*, Comptroller of the Customs, and Member for the town of *St. George*. Mr. *Williams* has heard the Gospel in *England*, and, I believe, loves it. He gave us great encouragement, expressed his desire that we would visit him at his country-house, and assured us that he would be glad to open the way of any Missionary we should send, as far as he could.

About eleven in the morning we set off on a journey of about thirty miles over the highest hills in the Island. On the top of the highest we could wear our great coats buttoned. On this hill there is one of the best Inns I have met with in the *West-Indies* for the kindness of the people, and the reasonableness of their charges: it is also very commodious. It is called *Grand Etang* from a great Lake which is near it. This Lake is very deep, and supplies (I am informed) by subterraneous passages the twelve rivers (*brooks* we should call them) which water the Island. The Lake is surrounded by large Peaks covered with wood. If I was to turn hermit, I think I should fix on this place, where I would make circular walks, and fix an observatory on one of the Peaks, and spend my time in communion with God and in the study of Astronomy and Botany. At the Tavern we met with a servant of the gentleman (*John Rae*, Esq.) whom we were going to visit, who brought us by the nearest but a wretched way to his master's house about nine at night. The gentleman of the house, who is the Agent of two principal *West-India* merchants in *London*, from one of whom I brought him a commendatory letter, treated us with every attention and kindness, and informed us that he had nine hundred Negroes under his direction, and that they were (as far as his influence went) open to the instruction, and his house to the entertainment, of any Missionary I should recommend. We shall have some difficulty with those
Negroes,

Negroes, as the Romish Priests have too great a footing among them.

The next day we rode to a town called *Guave*, where we took shipping again; and after touching at *St. Vincent's* and taking up *Mr. Lumb* and *Mr. Werrill*, arrived in *Antigua* on the 5th of December.

Here I indeed found myself at home; and spent four comfortable days in this Island. At the baptism of three adults we had a memorable time. One of them was so overcome, that she fell into a swoon, and all she said for some time, but with an enraptured countenance, was "Heaven! Heaven! Come! Come!" On the last evening, after I had preached, three drunken gentlemen (so called) attacked *Mr. Baxter* in a most rude manner at the door of the chapel. He made some reply, on which they seized him; and one of them cried out, "I'll murder thee, *Baxter*, I'll murder thee." *Mrs. Baxter* hearing the horrid expressions, seemed to be almost distracted: and many of the Negroes cried, "*Mr. Baxter*, our own *Mr. Baxter*, is murdered." Many who were in their own houses, and did not distinctly understand the cry, apprehended there was a fire: so that soon the whole town was in an uproar. Two Magistrates however with great spirit and discretion at last reduced every thing to order; and sent to *Mr. Baxter* to inform him, that if he would lodge an information in the morning, the rioters should be severely punished. We returned our thanks by letter in the most courteous and grateful manner we were able; but informed them that we took greater pleasure in forgiving than in prosecuting, and therefore begged leave to drop our information.

The work of God deepens in this Island; and the converted Negroes give a more pointed and more scriptural account of their experience than they used to do. On Wednesday the eighth, at eleven at night we set sail for *St. Christopher's*: and after touching at *Montserrat* (where I trust

we

we shall soon have a mission) we landed on *St. Kitt's* on the ninth at ten at night.

Three of the Preachers being not yet arrived, I set off with Mr. *Baxter* to visit *St. Eustatius* on the tenth. Landing late in the evening we delayed our visit to the new Governor (who has been lately sent out from *Holland*) till the morning. When we waited on him, he received us with very great rudeness indeed. Finding from inquiry that the truly serious had liberty to meet together without molestation, we judged it best to leave the Island as quietly as possible. However, we called on our kind friend Mr. *Lindsay* who had received me and my brethren with so much love and hospitality two years ago: but alas! we found him and left him in the depth of despair. The only reason he gave us for his deplorable situation was, that the Lord had very powerfully called him time after time to preach, and that he had as often resisted the call; till at last he entirely lost a sense of the favour of God. He seemed to have no hope left. We endeavoured to raise his drooping head, but all in vain. By this time our arrival on the Island was well known: and while we were at breakfast in the Inn, one of the brethren, a white man of the name of *Ryley*, called on us, and informed us that upwards of two hundred met regularly in Class under their respective Leaders—that the Lord had raised eight exhorters among them, of whom he was one—that they all looked on themselves as Methodists—and that if I would correspond with them from time to time by the way of *St. Kitt's*, they would punctually perform all the directions that should be given them concerning the management of the Society. He also informed me that a considerable number of the brethren and sisters that were free negroes, intended being at *St. Kitt's* on Christmas-day in order to enjoy the ordinances with one of our Ministers. I promised to correspond with them, and desired them to refer all
their

their difficulties to the advice and decision of our Assistant-Minister in *St. Christopher's*. The above-mentioned brother *Ryley* was awakened about four years ago by poor black *Harry*, of whom I can hear no tidings. We afterwards set sail for the Island of *Nevis*, where we arrived in the evening.

My old hospitable friend *Mr. Ward*, the Judge of the Admiralty, received me with every kindness and civility. On Sunday the twelveth, I preached twice and *Mr. Baxter* once in our chapel in *Charlestown*, the only town in this Island. In the course of the day we held a love-feast, where I enjoyed much satisfaction in the accounts given by some of our brethren concerning their experience. One young black man particularly, who spoke better English than the rest, gave us a very pleasing detail of the circumstances of his conviction and conversion—how he was drawn (to use his own words) out of the dark shades, and from the power of Satan, into glorious liberty. The next day we paid short visits to several of our friends in the country, particularly *Mr. Richard Nesbitt*, the most pious white man I believe I have ever met with in the *West-Indies*, the Missionaries themselves perhaps excepted. He has met with many misfortunes in life, but he is truly crucified to the world, and the world to him. He is not ashamed to assist us in instructing and exhorting the numerous bodies of Negroes on the several estates of his first cousin *Mr. Walter Nesbitt*, on one of which he resides. From his house, and with him, we went to dine with *Walter Nesbitt, Esq.* who has, concentrated in him, every thing that can constitute the man of honour and the gentleman. I never knew, till my present visit to this Island, that the sensitive plant is a native of the *West-Indies*. And now, for the first instance, I found time to examine the whole process of sugar-making.

In the evening I preached and lodged in the house of *Mr. Kane*, a planter and a friend, where
that

that dear man Mr. *Richard Nesbitt* concluded the day with us, and promised to make us a visit at *St. Kitt's*, which he accordingly performed. The next morning we returned to *St. Christopher's*, and our absent brethren soon after arriving, we began our Conference on Wednesday the fifteenth of December. It continued for two days and part of a third, and was conducted and concluded in great peace. The stations of the Preachers and the numbers in Society are as follows:

The Stations of the Preachers.

1. Barbadoes, Matthew Lumb.
2. St. Vincent's, Robert Gamble, James Lyons.
3. Grenada, Thomas Owens.
4. Antigua, John Baxter, Benjamin Pearce.
5. Nevis, John M'Vean.
6. St. Christopher's, William Warrenner, George Skerritt.
7. Tortola, John Harper.
8. Jamaica, William Hammet, Thomas Werrill, William Brazier.

The numbers in Society.

1. Antigua	{ Whites	36
	{ Mulattoes	105
	{ Blacks	2113
2. St. Christopher's	{ Whites and	
	{ Mulattoes	280
	{ Blacks	1120
3. Nevis	{ Whites	6
	{ Coloured People	394
4. Tortola	{ Whites	18
	{ Coloured People	1800
5. St. Vincent's	{ Whites	13
	{ Coloured People	450
6. Barbadoes		

6. Barbadoes	{ Whites	30
	{ Coloured People	30
7. Jamaica	{ Whites and	
	{ Mulattoes	40
	{ Blacks	110
<hr/>		
Total,		6545½
<hr/>		

§ In some of the returns the round numbers only are inserted, although there were a few more.

I am, my dear Sir,

With very great respect,

Your most dutiful, obliged and

Affectionate Son,

THOMAS COKE.

